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THE VICES

Of the CITIES of

K

LONDON *and* WESTMINSTER.

Trac'd from their ORIGINAL.

BEING

An impartial Detection of the true Cauſe and Source of the preſent Growth of Immorality, and the prodigious number of Theſts and Robberies daily committed in the Streets, *&c.* of this Metropolis.

WITH

Some rational Hints propoſed for removing thoſe Evils, reſtoring the Morals of the People, and ſecuring our Perſons and Properties againſt the Outrages of theſe Villains.

In Five LETTERS, from a Citizen of *London* to a Member of Parliament.

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THE VICES Of the CITIES of LONDON *and* WESTMINSTER.

LETTER I.

Containing, The Introduction, and a neceſſary Caution, that unleſs the honeſt few are zealous in beginning a Reformation in themſelves, and promoting the ſame in the Body of the People, it is paſt the Power of the Magiſtrate, or of any human Power, to redreſs our preſent Misfortunes.

SIR,

THE almoſt univerſal Contempt of Religion, the total Perverſion of the Morals, eſpecially of the lower Claſs of People, the infinite Number of Robberies, and other moſt enormous Crimes, that prevail at this Time, in this Metropolis, and Parts adjacent, are become the Subject of every Man's Complaint, and call aloud for the Attention of every honeſt Subject; but ought particularly to awaken the Concern of the Legiſlature, and every Perſon entruſted with any Degree of Power, to apply ſome ſpeedy and effectual Remedy to the growing Evil, that threatens the Peace and Deſtruction of the Community.

That Prophaneneſs, Infidelity and practical Atheiſm, that Luxury, Prodigality, Idleneſs, and every Species of Wickedneſs, for which our Language has a Name, have ſpread themſelves like a Deluge over the Face of the whole Kingdom, is a Truth no Man denies; all are ſenſible of the Evils that threaten us, every Individual confeſſes the dangerous Malady that preys upon the Vitals of the Body politic, and all with one Voice cry out for Redreſs, and a ſpeedy Reformation of theſe glaring Abuſes. But from whence this Salvation is to be expected, where the Reformation is to begin, or how the Cure is to be effected, is a Myſtery paſt the Comprehenſion of moſt Men; and the Taſk itſelf ſo arduous, that few Individuals, however otherwiſe qualified, have Courage, ſo much as ſeriouſly to make the Redreſs of theſe publick Calamities, the Subject of their Conſideration. We are in the State of a Merchant, who has allowed his Accompts to lie ſo long in Diſorder, who has permitted his Affairs to run into ſo great Confuſion, that he dares not bring his Books to a Balance, for Fear he ſhould find himſelf undone paſt Redemption; and ſo either out of Lazineſs or Puſillanimity, permit Bankruptcy and Miſery to overtake him; when, perhaps, by a little timely Care, he might have prevented the fatal Diſaſter, and preſerved his Credit and Reputation.

The Diſtemper is indeed dangerous, the whole Maſs is corrupted, every Limb and Member, ſeized with a mortal Gangreen, and a Complication of Diſeaſes puzzles the Skill of the Phyſician. However, we are not yet incurable; there are ſtill Officinals in the political *Materia Medica* potent enough to effect the Cure, if it is attempted by ſkilful Hands, and not delayed till the Patient is ſo far weakened by the Diſorder, as to want Strength to go through the Operation.

As it is every Man's Intereſt, who has a Value for his Peace, and the Safety of his Perſon and Property, and every Man's Duty, who has the leaſt Regard for the Good of his Country and the Happineſs of the Commonwealth, to wiſh for a Redreſs of theſe Grievances, and to contribute all in his Power to put a Stop to that Torrent of Vice and Immorality that overwhelms the Nation. I hope, Sir, you will not think it impertinent in me to lay before you my Thoughts on that important Subject; and to endeavour, as the firſt Step towards the Removal of theſe Complaints, to trace theſe Evils to their Fountain Head, that their proper Remedies may be applied. Every Man, the moſt ignorant Creature in the Kingdom, feels the Diſeaſe, and the moſt hard-hearted are moved with Compaſſion for the Crowds, that daily fall, I may ſay uſeleſs Victims to the Laws of the

Country, without the ſmalleſt Proſpect of a Decreaſe of thoſe Crimes, that bring ſo many to Deſtruction, and rob the Publick every Seſſions of ſo many of its Members; but it is very few that are able to trace theſe Calamities to their real Source, and conſequently they muſt be utterly uncapable of pointing out the adequate Means of Redreſs. The Vulgar, and by much the greateſt Part of the People, are utterly uncapable of ſuch a Diſquiſition; and our Superiors, Men in Power and high Life, are too far removed from the Scene of Action to have ſufficient Matter or Information to finiſh the neceſſary Enquiry to an Affair of ſo complicated a Nature. That I am equal to the Taſk I have undertaken, I will not take upon me to aſſert; but as you know my Motives diſintereſted, ſo I flatter myſelf, your Candour will take the Attempt in good Part, eſpecially ſince if I fail in the Deſign, it may awaken others more capable, to employ their Time and Thoughts upon a Subject of ſo great Importance to the Publick.

It is common on theſe Occaſions for People to cry out for new Laws, ſeverer Penalties, for military Guards, Executions, and other dangerous Corroſives, to be applied to the quick ſpreading Evil. Theſe are the firſt Suggeſtions of the Vulgar, and of ſome Men, who think their Stations ſcreen them from being ranked with the Mob. They have no Plan of Government but Force, and no Coercive but what is founded on Fear, Cruelty and Violence; they are apt to blame the Laws in Being, or the Magiſtrate in Power for the publick Calamity, and think that publick Misfortunes are only to be removed by cutting, ſlaſhing, and continual Amputations.

But before I proceed on this intended Enquiry, I would recommend it to all Men, who have any Influence with the People, to all who have any Opportunity to remove their Prejudices; I ſay, I would recommend it to ſuch, as a Truth that ought to be inculcated on all Occaſions, that unleſs there is a general Diſpoſition in the Body of the People, to co-operate with the Magiſtrate in the Suppreſſion of Vice and Immorality; and in the Execution of the Laws againſt publick Offenders, that it is out of the Power of any human Legiſlature, to contrive Laws, that can make that People honeſt, happy, or free. If Virtue and Liberty prevail in a Country bleſſed with a Conſtitution ſuch as ours, it muſt be owing to that Diſpoſition prevailing in the Generality of the People; without which, either the Government muſt be entirely military, and the Subjects kept to their Duty by planting a Bayonet at every Man's Door, or they muſt be in the State we are now in, free from legal Force and Violence, but Bond-Slaves to Vice, Luxury, and all Degrees of Wickedneſs, which may in Time bring this ugly Conſequence along with it; that the few honeſt Men amongſt us, will be neceſſitated to put into the Hands of the Government ſuch a Power as may enable it to ſecure their Perſons and Properties from Robbers; but leave both at the Mercy of a wicked or deſigning Miniſtry, and to put into their Hands a Force ſufficient at the Pleaſure, to ſtrip us of what they have ſaved from their Banditti. In a Word, I would be underſtood to mean, that unleſs every individual, who complains of theſe Abuſes, begins the Reformation within himſelf, in his own Family, and in his own Practice, unleſs every Man in his Station is zealous in encouraging Virtue and Induſtry, both by his Advice and Example; unleſs every Man, who pretends to be honeſt, and wiſhes to be free, makes a Point of Conſcience of proſecuting and bringing to Juſtice every Offender againſt the Laws of his Country; unleſs the inferior Springs of Government, entruſted with the Execution of the Laws, are obliged and kept cloſe to the Diſcharge of their Duty. It is in vain to look for better Times, it is needleſs to make new Laws, or multiply penal Statutes, and Madneſs to expect, that any Means projected by the Wit of Man, can be effectual to remove the preſent Evils, excepting by ſuch a Remedy, as to every *Britiſh* Subject muſt appear worſe than the Diſeaſe; that is, unleſs that Diſpoſition is in the Generality of the People, and all Means uſed to promote it; human Policy can invent no Means to ſtop the Progreſs of Vice, or ſecure our Perſons and Properties from Thieves, but by employing ſuch a Force of Guards and Garriſons as muſt reduce us to a military Form of Government, and leave us entirely at the Mercy of arbitrary Power.

To the thinking Part of Mankind, this Doctrine muſt appear almoſt ſelf-evident, and therefore ſome may imagine, that in the very Opening of my Enquiry, I have ſuperceded the Neceſſity of any ſuch Thing, and ſhew'd us only that our Situation is deſperate, and that we have no Choice left, but either to continue Slaves to the Ravages of Midnight Robbers, and common Highwaymen, or at once throw up our boaſted Conſtitution, and become Slaves to a military Force, ſomething like which is nearly approaching, when the Authority of the civil Magiſtrate is at ſo low an Ebb, that a Pickpocket cannot be ſent to Jail, nor a petty Gaming-houſe ſuppreſs'd without the pompous Aſſiſtance of the military Power. For, ſome may think, that the Conditions on which I have founded the Succeſs of any future Regulations for the Redreſs of theſe Grievances, are, in their Nature, next to impoſſible to be complied with, that is, ſay they, the Morals of the People are ſo much debauch'd, there is ſuch a total Neglect and Contempt of every Thing relating to the publick Good, that not one Man in a Hundred, much leſs the Generality of the People, think themſelves, in any Meaſure bound to promote it. If then that Diſpoſition is neceſſary in the Generality of the People, before our publick Grievances are redreſs'd, we muſt deſpair of ever ſeeing that happy Period, without omnipotent Power ſhould work a Change in the Hearts of the Inhabitants of theſe, once happy, Iſlands.

But our Caſe is not quite ſo deſperate; for though the Morals of the People are much debauch'd, and tho' it is abſolutely true, that theſe muſt be mended before the wiſeſt Regulations can have their full Weight; yet, they are not ſo far gone in Vice, but they may be reclaim'd, and render'd fit for Freedom, and worthy to be free. If the better Sort of People, if the Clergy, if thoſe, who thoroughly convinc'd in their Conſcience, of the Neceſſity of a Reformation, will but every Man begin the Work upon himſelf, and in his own Family; the Generality, the Vulgar, who are but bad Mimicks of their Betters, will ſoon follow their Example, will be ſoon cured of their fooliſh Prejudices, that make them at preſent ſo much in Love with Vice, as to oppoſe every Meaſure that tends to ſuppreſs it.

Let us ſuppoſe the Vulgar, which I take to be no leſs than nine Parts in ten of the Community, to be as wicked as we can imagine; yet if the other tenth Part are truly virtuous and ſincere in their Deſires for a perfect Reformation, it is in their Power to effect it without any new Law, or any coercive Power, more than what exiſts. Let every Man examine his own Conduct impartially, and aſk himſelf ſeriouſly, is there any Vice, that I have either connived at or encouraged? is there any Folly or Vanity tending to debauch the Morals of the People, that I have wink'd at or promoted? Do I know of any Offenders againſt the publick Laws of the Kingdom calculated for reſtraining Vice and Debauchery, that I have conceal'd from the Knowledge of the Magiſtrate, or ſcreen'd from Juſtice out of Intereſt, Party Views, or a fooliſh Compaſſion? Have I been remiſs in ſupporting the Authority of the civil Magiſtrate, and oblig'd him by my Negligence to have anticonſtitutional Recourſe to the military on almoſt every trifling Occurrence? Let, I ſay, every conſcientious Man aſk himſelf theſe Queſtions, and anſwer them truly, as I believe moſt Men muſt, in the Affirmative; let him reform theſe Errors, and tho' the Number of ſuch honeſt Men are few in Proportion to the Bulk of the People, yet, I dare venture to affirm, that, without a Miracle, the Manners of the Vulgar will ſoon take a different Turn, and Laws calculated for their Freedom and Happineſs operate naturally without Force or Violence, and produce the Effect propoſed.

It is to theſe happy thinking few, that this Enquiry is directed, and for that Reaſon, I ſhall point out the Means, by which the People have been debauch'd, and the Prejudices and Errors, that oppoſe the Growth of a Reformation; that theſe removed, the Laws already in Being may have their Force and Efficacy, and ſuch further Regulations made as the Circumſtances of the Times require, without meeting the Fate of moſt *Engliſh* Statutes, of being made to be read only, and not to be executed; but I have already exceeded the Bounds of a Letter, and am,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and

Moſt humble Servant.

LETTER II.

Containing, the partial and careleſs Execution of the Laws, the firſt grand Source of our Vices The Cauſes and groundleſs Prejudice that prevent their Execution enumerated, viz. *Weakneſs and fooliſh Compaſſion in ſome, Selfiſhneſs, and Diſregard to the Publick, and Lazineſs in others, and the wrong Notion moſt entertain of the Nature of what is invidiouſly called an Informer; the careleſs Choice of Grand Jury-men and Conſtables, and their Remiſſneſs in their Duty, with a Parochial Aſſociation, propoſed to detect Offenders, and diſcountenance ſuch Prejudices as prevent their Puniſhment.*

SIR,

THO' it's a melancholy Truth, that there is no Country on Earth, where Vice and Immorality are ſo predominant as in this Nation, eſpecially in theſe great Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*; yet it is equally true, that there is not a Kingdom on the Face of the Globe, that can boaſt of ſo many and ſo wholeſome Laws, calculated with great Wiſdom, and enforced with proper Sanctions to diſcourage Vice and promote Religion, and the Practice of Virtue and Piety. To Look at our Law-Books, and examine our Collections of publick Statutes, a Foreigner would imagine, that it's impoſſible for a People to be more Happy, ſince in theſe Books and Collections there is not a Grievance that can happen, but what is provided with a Wiſe and adequate Remedy, there is no outrage upon our Perſon, no attack upon our Properties, againſt which the Law does not provide a ſafe and eaſy Redreſs; yet, let the ſame Man examine the Enormities that are daily committed in our Streets, the Account of the ſtrange and unparalleled Crimes that are committed in all the Roads and Avenues to this Metropolis, the miſerable Complaints that are in the Mouths of every Man againſt Wickedneſs unpuniſhed, he would be apt to conclude that we were a People, without Laws, without Form of Government, but like the *Hottentots*, Savages, in a mere State of Nature, without Humanity, or any Veſtage of civil Polity. In a Word, Sir, we have the beſt Laws, but the worſt executed of any Nation under the Sun, and to this Source we may trace the preſent enormous Growth of Wickedneſs and Impiety; and till thoſe we have already are drawn into Execution, it's needleſs, nay mere Madneſs, to create any more uſeleſs Scarcrow Statutes.

There, are, Sir, ſome Prejudices, founded on falſe Notions of Things, but ſtrengthen'd by Cuſtom, and authorized by the Example, even of the wiſeſt and beſt amongſt us, that prevent the Execution of our Laws. To point out theſe ſhall be the Subject of this Letter, in which though at firſt Sight, I may ſeem ſingular in ſome of my Opinions, yet I flatter myſelf on a patient Hearing, I ſhall convince you, and the thinking Part of Mankind, that my Notions are founded on Reaſon.

In the firſt Place, Selfiſhneſs ſo far prevails over the Minds and Diſpoſitions of all Ranks of People, that few or none think themſelves under any kind of moral Obligation, to ſerve the Publick, unleſs they are paid for it, and even then, they are more anxious to receive the Sallary and Perquiſites, than to diſcharge the Duties of their Office; every Man has fix'd a fooliſh and unnatural Diſtinction between himſelf and the Government, making them two diſtinct Bodies, purſuing different and contradictory Intereſts. He looks upon Government as a Burthen, and thinks if he pays the unwilling Taxes, he has done the Part of a true Subject, and that he is no way concerned in the Execution of the Laws, or obliged to detect any Infringement of publick Statutes, unleſs he is in a particular Poſt, entruſted with their Direction. But a wiſe Man, ſo happy as to be a Subject of *Great-Britain*, ought to know, that the Government and the People, the Legiſlature and He are truly the ſame Thing, that it's impoſſible to divide them either in Nature or Intereſts; that he himſelf is a Part of the Government, as well as of the People; that the Taxes he pays are to himſelf, for his own Uſe, Benefit, and Happineſs; that the Laws and Statutes enacted are *virtually* of his own making, as much as if he had deliberated upon and voted for their paſſing, and conſequently, that he is as much perſonally injur'd by any Infringment againſt the Spirit and natural Meaning of theſe Laws, as when his Debtor forfeits his Bond or Articles, and equally concerned in Honour and Conſcience to puniſh the Offender, as to ſue his Debtor to Execution, or an Arreſt.

But tho' few Men will own themſelves ſo weak as to deny this Doctrine in Theory, yet there are ſome other Prejudices that prevent the Effects of ſuch a Perſuaſion; for though I know it is my Duty as a Subject, and as a Chriſtian to detect and bring to juſtice all Offenders againſt the publick Laws, yet many are hindered from it by a fooliſh, effeminate Compaſſion; they are tender of their poor Neighbours Eaſe, and cannot find in their Hearts to be the Author of any Man's Miſery, however much he may have deſerved it. They ſee the Thief, and let him paſs, ſaying let the Villain go, let him fall into ſome other Hands, I care not to be the Ruin of any Man. Thus out of pure Humanity to Individuals, Villainy goes unpuniſhed, the Laws are trampled on, and the Publick bleeds by the Means of his beſt natured, and moſt compaſſionate Sons; but if true Benevolence moves the Heart of an honeſt Man, the Publick muſt be the firſt Object of his Compaſſion, and as he knows Vice unpuniſhed doubly wounds the Common-wealth, and multiplies Evil upon innocent Inviduals, the wiſe Man ſteels his Heart againſt the weak and worthleſs Suggeſtions of Pity for the Criminal, feels every tender Emotion of his Perſon, but zealouſly purſues him to condign Puniſhment, out of Compaſſion to the injured many, and the violated Laws of his Country.

This ill-timed Pity, and effeminate Compaſſion, is ſtrengthned by the Lazineſs and Indolence of many; they cannot bear the Fatigue, and perhaps grudge a ſmall Expence to bring the moſt Guilty to Juſtice. They think it all loſt Time that is ſpent in the Service of their Country, and cannot prevail on themſelves to ſteal a Moment from the moſt trifling Amuſement, or from the important Buſineſs of doing nothing, to vindicate violated Juſtice, and to ſecure their own, and their Neighbours Property from Violence and Oppreſſion, however, much it may be in their Power. It's impoſſible that theſe People can think of the Conſequence of their remiſſneſs and criminal Indolence, or that they have any Notion that they themſelves, their Friends, Neighbours, Children, and lateſt Poſterity are deeply intereſted in the Execution of the Laws, and ſuffer a ſlow, but certain Poiſon, to act upon their Vitals, as long as they connive at the Breach of, or neglect to bring to Juſtice any Offender againſt the Publick Laws of their Country. But Things are now come to ſuch a Criſis, that we muſt either lie at the Mercy of every deſperate Villain, that can purchaſe a Caſe of Piſtols, to bid us ſtand and deliver, or ſubmit to the wiſe Project of a late Projector, of having a Soldier, or a Garriſon of Soldiers, planted at the Diſtance of every Quarter of a Mile throughout the Kingdom, and ſo hold all we have at the curteſy of a Military Power; ſure this muſt awaken our Attention, rouſe us from that ſtupid Indolence, and enduce every Man, that has a Senſe of Conſcience, every Man that has any Property to loſe, or any Notion that Liberty is worth preſerving to exert himſelf in this Station, in ſuppreſſing Vice, and theſe Neſt and Seminaries of Vice that debauch the People, and in bringing to Puniſhment every Species of Offenders againſt the Public Peace.

But ſuppoſing our Compaſſion directed to it's proper Object the Public Good, and that Danger has alarmed the Indolent; there is yet another faſhionable Prejudice to combat, that is, that Cuſtom and the prevailing Opinion has fixed a Kind of univerſal Odium, and Scandal upon the Man, who is ſo hardy as to inform the Magiſtrate, or aſſiſt him in bringing the blackeſt Offenders to Juſtice; ſuch as do, are at beſt looked upon as officious, buſy, meddling, troubleſome Fellows, are ſhun'd and deſpiſed by moſt Men, and by many branded with the odious Name of Informers, Spys, *&c.* Epithets, now become ſo ſcandalous, that no Man, who values his Reputation, dares appear openly to proſecute a Villain, except the Injury has been perſonal to himſelf, by which Means thouſands Eſcape, that otherways would fall a Sacrifice to injur'd Juſtice.

In a Country, where the Government and People are two diſtinct Bodies, that is, where the Subjects have no Hand in making thoſe Laws that govern them; it may poſſibly happen, that Penal Laws may be ſo multiplied to ſupport the baſe Purpoſes of Tyranny, and Arbitrary Power, that an honeſt Man in ſuch a Kingdom, would be aſhamed to enforce ſuch Laws, either by Information, or any other Aſſiſtance to the Magiſtrate. In ſuch a Country, Informers may be juſtly look'd upon as the Peſts of Civil Society, and the baſe Tools of Tyranny and Oppreſſion. But in a Conſtitution ſuch as this, under which we live, where the Laws are made by the People, as well for their Intereſt, Informers againſt Offenders ought to be looked upon in a quite different Light, ſince we muſt ſuppoſe the People conſenting to no Laws, but what are manifeſtly for the public Utility, and conſequently, that every Man that enforces them or brings Offenders againſt them to Juſtice, ought to be looked upon as acting the honeſt Part of a Patriot. But the Generality have annexed to the Word Informer the Idea of a Wretch, who has ſold his Soul and Body to ſerve a wicked Miniſtry; who has no other View in giving Information, but the mean Deſign of enriching himſelf with the Penalty, and the malicious Pleaſure of plaguing his Neighbours, without any Regard to the publick Intereſt. And for this Reaſon alone, it is now certain, that the Magiſtrate has no other Means of coming to the Knowledge of Delinquents, but from Wretches of the above Character; who, as Money is their Motive, take Care to inform againſt none, but ſuch as are not of their Gang, or that have not Money to purchaſe their Connivance and Protection.

Is it any Wonder, then, that our Laws are badly executed, when their natural Guardians, thoſe who have enacted them, thoſe for whoſe Intereſt they were made, are aſhamed to protect them, and have left them to the Care and Management of Thieves, Picpockets, and the Scum and Off-ſcowrings of Mankind? I think it is no Miracle, that they are not, but rather that there is any Notice taken of them at all. Are Men's Properties become ſo little their Concern? Are our Liberties of ſo little Value to *Engliſhmen*, that they are aſhamed to be inſtrumental in bringing to Juſtice thoſe Wretches that daily commit ſuch Outrages upon the one, and ſap the Foundation of the other? Is there no Man who has ſo much Value for the Publick, or for himſelf in his Publick Capacity, as to combat this baſe Prejudice, and boldly own himſelf a Protector of theſe Laws he himſelf has framed, and bring to Juſtice Delinquents from a Motive of publick Spirit, without Regard to the mercenary View of the Penalty ?

I am not here contending that an honeſt Man ought to buſy himſelf in diſcovering every Delinquent againſt all the Penal Laws, that have crept of late into our Conſtitution; I mean only, that as there are Laws already in being, capable of reforming the Abuſes, we are now ſpeaking of, Laws that, if duly executed, and all the Offenders againſt them impartially proſecuted and puniſhed, would be a rational Means to recover the loſt Morals of the People, reſtore the Authority of the Civil Magiſtrate, and free us from the Dread of Thieves and Highwaymen. I ſay, that as we have ſuch Laws, if honeſt Men, Men of Character and Reputation, would openly inform the Magiſtrate of all Offenders againſt theſe, and ſtrenuouſly inſiſt upon their being proſecuted and brought to Juſtice, the Spirit of Reformation might ſeize the Body of the People, and theſe Neſts and Seminaries of Wickedneſs, that have ſo long debauched the People, at laſt rooted out. It is remarkable, hat a Gin-ſeller, a Bawdy-houſe-Keeper, &c. is not afraid of their reputable Neighbours, no, they are ſure of their Connivance, if not their Protection; they are only afraid of Strangers and Villains; but if every honeſt Pariſhioner would himſelf inform againſt theſe, and all ſuch Abuſes of he like Kind, as are tranſacted under his Eye, and with is own Knowledge, we ſhould not, in ſix Weeks, have any Grounds for the leaſt Complaints, made by People who exclaim againſt Abuſes they themſelves promote by their wilful Connivance. Sit but half an Hour in Company with any ſober Houſe-keeper of the Pariſhes of *St. Martin*'s, or *Covent-Garden*, you cannot fail to hear him exclaim againſt diſorderly Houſes, Street-Walkers, &c, and hold forth pathetically enough againſt the fatal Influence ſuch Places have on the Morals of the People, and the Peace and Safety of the Public. Admit his wiſe Obſervation to be juſt and true, and he joins with you in wiſhing ſuch Houſes ſuppreſs'd; aſk him if he knows any of them in rticular, he will own that he does; but urge him to go and inform the Magiſtrate, whoſe Hands are tied up without ſuch Informations, and this querulous good Man ſhrinks ck, makes ſome ſlight Evaſion, and concludes, that he orns to be an Informer; that is, that he expects the Maſtrate is to come to the Knowledge of theſe Abuſes by

Inſpiration, and that it is beneath him to ſerve himſelf by removing the Subject of his juſt Complaint on the Publick, by bringing publick Offenders to Juſtice, for Fear of a Name that has nothing in it that ſhould fright a Man, conſcious that he acts from a Love of Juſtice, and Motive of publick Good. But there is ſo much in this Name of an Informer, that ſome Allowance muſt be made for ſuch ſtrong Prejudices as are againſt it; and therefore, to remove their Force, I would propoſe, that ſuch Gentlemen of Reputation, as are convinced that the Peace and Safety of the Publick depend upon the due Execution of theſe Laws, would break the Ice, and give an Example, by publickly informing againſt Delinquents that come within their Knowledge, and reſolve never to uſe their Credit or Intereſt, to ſcreen or conceal Offenders from publick Juſtice. For this Purpoſe I would recommend an Aſſociation to be ſet on Foot in every Pariſh in *London*, *Weſtminiſter*, and Parts adjacent, of the principal Inhabitants, and moſt reputable Houſe-keepers, by which they ſhould bind themſelves by the moſt ſolemn Engagement to diſcover all Offenders againſt ſuch Laws as are calculated for preſerving the Morals of the People, and ſecuring their Properties againſt the Outrages of Thieves, *&c.* and to proſecute ſuch without Favour or Affection, or Partiality, to the utmoſt Rigour of the Law.

Such an Aſſociation would ſoon reſtore the Laws to their full Vigour, encourage People of a lower Claſs to deſpiſe the Name of Informer, and to diſcover many Abuſes that come oftener within their Knowledge, than others of a higher Claſs; and by that Means, we may expect to ſee theſe Cities freed from theſe Neſts of Vice and Impiety, that gives ſo much Scandal and Offence to Religion and Morality.

The Pariſh of *St. Paul's*, *Covent-Garden*, have in ſome Meaſure begun a Thing of the Kind, by a voluntary Subſcription for a Reward to Informers; but if theſe Gentlemen would mend their Scheme, and become Informers themſelves, in every Caſe that comes within their Knowledge, I am perfectly convinc'd, that they would ſave moſt of their Subſcription Money, and long before this Time, a great Part of the Nuiſances complain'd of would have been removed from their Diſtrict; for I dare lay an equal Wager, that there is not a Subſcriber to that Scheme, but to his own Knowledge, is acquainted with ſome, if not many, reputed diſorderly Houſes. Why then ſhould he hire an Informer, or delay acquainting the Magiſtrate, and bring theſe Wretches to Juſtice? By the Reward, he only gives the Crew of mercenary Informers an Opportunity of raiſing the Price of their Silence, and enhancing their Stipends from theſe Neſts of Thieves.

There is yet another Cauſe of the bad Execution of the Laws, that depends more upon the Subject than the Magiſtrate; that is, the Negligence of the moſt honeſt Conſtable, in preſenting Delinquents in their Diſtrict to the Grand-Jury, and the Remiſſneſs of the Juries in making Preſentments to the Court, or finding Indictments; and the bad Choice that are made of Conſtables, Beadles and other Officers, is perhaps the greateſt Security for the Impunity of Offenders of every Claſs. It is a well known Caſe, that moſt diſorderly Houſes are in Fee with ſome of theſe Raſcals, whoſe duty it is to detect them; and that there are ſo many Ways to ſtifle Indictments before the Grand Juries, that it is next to an Impoſſibility to bring any of them to Juſtice. It is a conmon Thing to make Publicans Conſtables, than which, there are no Men more improper; their Buſineſs keeps them in a general Dependence on their Neighbours; and it is no Secret what Faults drinking a few Bowls of Punch at the Conſtable's Houſe will conceal. It ſhould be the Buſineſs, then of ſuch an Aſſociation I have juſt hinted, to uſe their Intereſt, that Grand-Juries ſhould be often changed, compoſed of Men of Reputation, and Men zealous in the Cauſe of Reformation, above being brib'd, and of a Diſpoſition not to be driven from their Purpoſes by the Importunity of Friends, or the Threats of Knaves; that Conſtables ſhould be choſen of the ſame Stamp, and whoſe Profeſſion leaves them moſt Independent on their Neighbours; and that ſuch an Aſſociation ſhould take Care that theſe Conſtables do their Duty, and puniſh their Neglect; and that when Indictments are found, or Preſentments made by the Grand-Jury, that the Aſſociation ſhould ſee them proſecuted to their full Effect.

There is yet, Sir, another Abuſe that retards the Execution of our Laws, which, for the Reſpect I owe to Magiſtracy in general, I dare touch on but ſlightly; that is, the Scandal of what is call'd trading Juſtices. Common Fame ſpeaks a great many harſh Things of this Claſs of People, which if true, (and there cannot be ſo much Smoak without ſome Fire,) I ſhould be apt to conclude them the greateſt Nuiſance to Society; but if all is not true, it is ſtill a Scandal to Juſtice, that he, who is to diſperſe it, muſt live by Shillings gain'd from the Wrangles of the loweſt Claſs of the People. It degrades the Dignity of a Magiſtrate to be oblig'd to accept of ſuch mean Fees, and lays him under Suſpicions that greatly weakens his Authority, let his Integrity be never ſo cautiouſly guarded. For this Reaſon, I would think it no mean Bleſſing to the City of *Weſtminſter*, if the High Bailiff and Burgeſſes were cloathed with the Powers of Juſtices of the Peace, in the ſame Manner as the Aldermen of *London*; and, that they ſhould ſit daily by Turns, for the Diſpatch of Buſineſs; or at leaſt, if a decent Salary were annex'd to the Office of Juſtice for this City and Liberty, that might pay theſe Gentlemen for their Trouble, and put them above the Suſpicion of doing low and mean Things, for the neceſſary Support of their Families, and the Dignity of his Majeſty's Commiſſion; of which the Vulgar muſt have but a mean Idea, when they are ſure his Worſhip is rejoic'd at every Opportunity that brings him a Shilling, however the Publick may ſuffer by the Affair that brings it him.

To conclude this Letter, Sir, if private Perſons will do their Duty, and either ſingle, or in Aſſociations, reſolve to withdraw all Countenance and Protection from Delinquents, and openly, from a Motive of publick Spirit, give the Magiſtrate all the Information and Aſſiſtance in their Power; if Care is taken in the Choice of Grand-Juries, Conſtables, &c. If theſe are zealous in the Diſcharge of their Duty, and are puniſh'd for every apparent Neglect; if the Magiſtrate aſſert, the Dignity of his Office, and acts up to the Duties of his Place, we may again ſee Juſtice executed without Partiality, the Neceſſity of a Military Power in Civil Affairs ſuperſeded, and Peace, Order, and Decency, take Place in the Society; and on Suppoſition that all wiſe Men intend ſome ſuch Thing, I ſhall, in my next Letters, point out the Abuſes againſt which our Laws have been ſo long dormant, and the Sources of the many Calamities theſe Cities groan under. I am,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and

moſt humble Servant.

LETTER III.

Containing publick Beggars, and the partial Execution of the Laws againſt them, a flagrant Source of our Vices. Means propoſed to extirpate them, and to diſable Foreigners to follow the Occupation of Cooks, Valets, Footmen, &c. *without a Bill of Naturalization. And* Iriſh *Vagrants to be obliged to have Paſſes before they are permitted to Land.*

SIR,

HOwever Divines may deſcribe the Nature of Man as prone to Evil, yet, I believe, every Man's Experience, will teach him, that few Men are born Villains; that no Man becomes wicked all at once, but debaſes his Nature by ſlow and often painful Degrees; Vice is contagious, it is communicated by Example, and improved by Habit. Vice and immorality are ſtrongly predominant in theſe Cities, but they have grown ſo by Degrees, and are daily encreaſing in all manner of Wickedneſs; there muſt be ſome Source, from whence this Malady took its Riſe, ſome latent Spring, that has communicated the black Contagion to all Degrees of People, which we muſt find out before a proper Care can be applied.

The Neglect of the Execution of our Laws is the firſt and grand Source of this Evil, and what has permitted it to grow to ſo enormous a Bulk. I have in my preceding Letters been full upon this Head, as judging it needleſs to mention Abuſes, if the the Laws againſt them are not to be enforc'd; ſuppoſing then, that firſt and grand Grievance removed, I ſhall now proceed to mention the Springs and Nurſeries of theſe publick Vices, that make us the Reproach of all Nations.

The firſt Source then, of the many Robberies, *&c.* committed in our Streets, that I ſhall take Notice of, is the prodigious and ſcandalous Encreaſe of publick Beggars. I have as much Compaſſion for the real Poor as any Man, but I own for this Claſs, I have not the ſmalleſt Charity. I know, if they are truly what they pretend, Objects of Charity, that there are ample Proviſion for them in their ſeveral Pariſhes, ſince there is no Nation under Heaven, that gives away more to the Poor, than the Inhabitants of this Iſland; and yet, I venture to affirm, that there are more publick Beggars in *London* and *Weſtminſter* alone, than in all the great Cities of *Europe* put together, tho the Revenue collected for the Uſe of the Poor in theſe Cities, exceeds the Revenues of ſome very reputable Sovereign States.

There are at leaſt, on a very moderate Computation, twenty-thouſand Souls within the Bills of Mortality, that live by the publick Trade of Begging and Pilfering, and other Arts of that ſly Profeſſion. The Maintenance of thoſe People, one with another, excluſive of thoſe legally provided for, allowing but Three-pence a Day *per* Head, which is one Half leſs than political Arithmeticians allow, amounts to fourſcore thouſand Pounds, and upwards; which of itſelf, excluding all other Inconveniencies attending it, is a prodigious Tax upon the Induſtrious, and the more grating that it is paid to Fraud, Lazineſs, and Impoſture.

That greateſt Part of theſe Vermin, live better in their ſecret Retirements, and carry Home more Money at Night, than moſt working Tradeſmen, is a well known Truth; that moſt of them are Thieves, is doubted by very few, and that the Young amongſt them, of which they have a greater Number, than their Proportion, are brought up to nothing but Thieving, Picking of Pockets, and Houſe-breaking, can ſcarce be call'd in Queſtion. If ſo, we need be at no Loſs, to account for the Encreaſe of Thieves, *&c.* where we ſee daily before us, and are ourſelves ſo very induſtrious to feed the Seminary, that breeds them in ſuch Swarms.

It is needleſs to take up much Time in deſcribing this Abuſe, or inculcating its Conſequences; it is ſeen, felt, and acknowledged, by all, and needeth no Law to redreſs it; but that People ſhould make uſe of their Reaſon, to refuſe their Bounty to all the begging Poor in general. If they would agree to this, the Beggars would vaniſh of themſelves; but they know our Weakneſs too well, and find ſo much of the Sweets of the mendicant Profeſſion, that no Conſideration can prevail on them to quit it. However, there are Laws in Being to force them to it; real Objects of Charity are amply ſecured in a decent Maintenance, and the Conſtables and Pariſh Officers, veſted with full Power to clear the Streets of theſe Nuiſances; but theſe neglect their Duty, and our Compaſſion is daily expoſed to the Inſinuations of theſe cheating Vagrants. Our only Difficulty then, is how to oblige theſe petty Officers to do their Duty. A careful Choice of theſe Officers may go a great Length to remedy this Evil; but if either their Numbers were augmented, or an Officer or two were appointed in every Pariſh, for this

Purpoſe alone, to continue till the Groſs of them were rooted out; if ſuch Officers were oblig'd to go their Rounds daily, and take up all the Beggars they met, and were liable to be fin'd, if they permitted any one to paſs them, or neglected to viſit their Haunts and Stations; if the Aſſociation I have mention'd in my Laſt, would reſolve themſelves, to take up all Beggars they met, to ſerve none of them at their Doors, and diligently put in Force all Laws againſt Vagrants and ſturdy Beggars, I fancy, a few Months would free us from thoſe devouring Locuſts, without having Recourſe to the Legiſlature, for any new Law. Tho' I muſt confeſs, I ſhould not be ſorry to ſee this Addition made to the Laws, againſt Beggars, *&c. viz.* That after any one of them had been paſs'd to his own Pariſh, or committed to a Workhouſe, if any of them ſhould be a ſecond Time caught begging in *London* or *Weſtminſter*, that they ſhould forthwith, on Conviction, be tranſported to one of his Majeſty's Colonies, where they might be render'd uſeful to their Mother Country, to which, they have been ſo long a Plague.

The begging Poor, Sir, are a flagrant Source of our preſent Misfortunes; but the Encreaſe of real Objects of Charity, is no leſs a Grievance, and a heavy Burthen on the Labour of the Induſtrious, and brings many of them to Penury and abandon'd Courſes, that otherwiſe might continue uſeful Members of Society. The Careleſſneſs of Pariſh Officers, and the Waſte that is ſaid to be made of the Funds allotted and levied for their Maintenance, make the Grievances fall heavier on the Subject, a Caſe that is certainly worth the Enquiry of the Legiſlature; for, I believe ſome Regulations might be made, that would provide better for the real Poor, and yet leſſen the Tax upon the induſtrious Inhabitants of this City. But to enter into that at preſent, I think foreign to my Purpoſe. It is here only neceſſary for me to obſerve, by what Means our native Poor are encreaſed to ſuch a Degree, as to become an inſufferable Burthen to the Community.

Amongſt the many obvious Cauſes of their Encreaſe, there is one very flagrant; that is, the intolerable Number of Foreigners that ſwarm about this Metropolis, and eat the Bread of the Natives. When I ſpeak of Foreigners, as a Nuiſance, I do not mean any employ'd in our Manufactures, but Vagrants, Valets, Footmen, Cooks, Confectioners, Taylors, Perriwig-makers, and many others employ'd in the conſuming Trades, Creatures, that whether Natives or Foreigners,

reigners, add nothing to the Publick Stock, whoſe Labours are never exported, but who live upon the Vanity, and feed the Luxury of the People.

In a well regulated Commonwealth, Care ſhould be taken, that theſe conſuming Artificers, theſe Tools of Luxury, ſhould not encreaſe even of the Natives themſelves; but how monſtrous is it, that notwithſtanding the Number of uſeleſs Hands, the number of ſtarving Families, that we have in theſe Branches, that are daily filling our Work-houſes with uſeleſs Mouths, of our own Country; that we ſhould permit ſuch Swarms of *French* and other Nations, to be daily imported upon us! I believe the Act againſt Vagrants, if duly executed, would free us of a great many; but it would be, Sir, a truly Patriot Act, if a Bill was paſs'd, diſabling Foreigners of any Nation whatever, from ſerving as Valets, Footmen, Cooks, Taylors, Mantuamakers, Perriwigmakers, *&c.* in any City or Town corporate in *Great-Britain*, without being firſt naturaliz'd by Act of Parliament.

Such a Bill as this would clear us at leaſt, in the Compaſs of the Bills of Mortality, of twenty thouſand uſeleſs, foreign Vanities, and make Room for as many of our Natives, who are now ſtarving and forc'd to rob, thieve, or filch, for Want of Bread. It would, allowing but Six-pence a Head, to be ſpent *per Diem*, on theſe Foreigners, ſave above eight-ſcore thouſand Pounds a Year, to theſe Cities; which, when divided amongſt our induſtrious Natives, would greatly leſſen the Poor Rates, and decreaſe the Number of Pariſh Penſioners.

When I am on the Subject of Foreigners, I cannot help mentioning the miſchief of Importing ſo many poor *Iriſh* every Year, under pretence of Hay-making; I would do it tenderly, without any View to make national Diſtinctions, or to ſow Miſtruſts between the Subjects of two Kingdoms, ſo cloſely united in one common Bond of Intereſt; but the Abuſes committed by many of theſe pretended Hay-makers, are too flagrant, not to excuſe me at the Hands of the worthy Gentlemen of that Nation, from wiſhing, that ſome Stop were put to their Importation, and that none ſhould be permitted to land without a regular Paſs. Some Such Regulation would be for the Honour and Intereſt of both Kingdoms, and could be oppoſed by none, but ſuch as are fond of Thieves and Sharpers. I am,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient,
Humble Servant.

LETTER IV.

Of Bawds and Bawdy-houſes. Means to deſtroy them, and a Propoſal for an Hoſpital for the Reception of repenting Proſtitutes. Of Gaming, its preſent State, Means to ſuppreſs private Play, and to render that Foible of the Great uſeful to the Publick, and raiſing from thence a Fund for Support of the Foundling-Hoſpital, &c.

SIR,

IN my laſt, I endeavour'd to illuſtrate the pernicious Conſequences of the Number of publick Beggars, how much they contribute towards the Encreaſe of Thieves, Highwaymen, *&c.* and offer'd ſome Hints to get rid of that publick Nuiſance, as well as to prevent the Encreaſe of real Objects of Charity. I would in this, turn your Attention to another Source of our Misfortunes; that is, the Number of Bawdy-houſes, looſe and diſorderly Women, that ply in all Corners, and with Impunity lay Snares for the Unwary, and debauch the Morals of our Youth, before they have arriv'd at Years of Experience, to guard againſt the Snares of theſe Deluders.

The unhappy Wretches that infeſt our Streets, to the great Scandal of Religion and Modeſty, are to be look'd upon as great Inſtruments of the Ruin of many thouſands; but the Bawds that help to debauch and trepan theſe poor Creatures, who ſupport and ſhelter them, in their Wickedneſs, who reap moſt of the Fruits of the Labours of theſe miſerable Drudges in Sin and Lewdneſs, are much more culpable, much more miſchievous to the Community, and merit no Mercy at the Hands of any Man, that has the leaſt Regard to Conſcience, Order, or Decency.

To deſcribe the Scenes of Debauchery, that are carried on under the Direction of theſe infernal Agents, would be a freſh Aſſault upon Modeſty, and to go about to enumerate the Murders, Robberies, Thefts, and Perjuries, that are either committed in theſe Neſts of Iniquity, or perpetrated by their Means and Inſtigation, would be a Work equally needleſs, ſince every Man is convinc'd, that few Men have been undone, few have gone to *Tyburn*, without owing Part, if not the Whole of their Misfortunes, to theſe

Brokers for the Devil, theſe wholeſale Dealers in Sin and Damnation. Yet, theſe Wretches, are conniv'd at, tolerated, nay, have their Patrons, Protectors, and Abettors, of Men, who pretend to be religious, and whoſe Years and Gravity, free them from the Suſpicion of any Calls from the Commodities vended in theſe Houſes. And tho' their Habitations, Perſons and Occupations, are as publick as St. *Paul's*, and *Charing-Croſs*, and known to every Paſſenger, yet they ſtand in open Defiance of the Law, and carry on their iniquitous Trade without the leaſt dread of Puniſhment.

It is needleſs, Sir, to call for new Laws to ſuppreſs theſe publick Peſts, our Law-Books are full of Statutes, Acts of Parliament, *&c.* to deſtroy them, the Method is potent to all Mankind, but theſe Laws like the reſt of our *Engliſh* Privileges, are only a mere dead Letter, ſcarce operating the Effect of a Scare-crow. It is equally needleſs to harangue the Paſſions of the Generality, upon the Neceſſity of rooting out theſe Springs of Vice and Villainy; the generality of this Nation are not to be rouſed from their Lethargy by the Rhetoric of Angels, the Calls of Conſcience, or the Dictates of Religion and Morality; they are deaf even to their own Intereſt, if the Gain is only conſequential, or in the ſmalleſt Meaſure removed from the Touch. In a Word, unleſs we are paid in ready Money, we will not ſave ourſelves from Slavery, Thieves, Highwaymen, or even Damnation; nor will not truſt the Publick with the ſmalleſt Share of our Labour but for a Day.

To the groſs, venal Body, I would not Addreſs myſelf on this Occaſion, but there are ſtill a few left, who for their own Sake, for the Glory of God, and the Intereſt of Religion, for the Liberty of the Publick, and Safety of their Poſterity may be prevailed on, to join in ſuppreſſing, by all legal Means, theſe Nurſeries of Impiety. I can frame to myſelf no Means to proſecute this Work but by an Aſſociation of ſuch Men, as I mentioned in a former Letter, who ſhall make the Deſtruction of theſe Vermin a chief Object of their Care, and under ſuch Inſpection and Protection, I make no doubt to ſee the *Strand*, and Places adjacent, as decently inhabited as any other Part of his Majeſty's Dominions.

But before I leave this Head, Charity and Humanity oblige me to ſay ſomething in behalf of theſe Wretches, who drudge in theſe Houſes of Vice. There are not perhaps on

Earth greater Objects of Compaſſion; all Senſe of Pleaſure is loſt to them, the Whole is mere Labour and Wretchedneſs, they are Slaves to, and buffetted by every drunken Ruffian, they are the Tools of, and tyrannized over by the Imps of Bawds, expoſed to all the Rigours of cold and inclement Weather, in conſtant dread of the Night Magiſtrate, worn out with Toil and a Loathſome Diſeaſe, they die wretched, without Pity or Compaſſion; they are moſt of them in ſober Hours, ſenſible of their Miſery, and wiſh to be free from a State in which there is neither preſent Pleaſure, nor Proſpect of Future Happineſs, and into which many of them have been enſnared by the Baſeneſs of thoſe who ſhould have protected their Innocency; but what moſt aggravates their Woe, they have no Means, no Hopes of a Retreat, they are debarred of all modeſt Society; no honeſt Family will receive them, let their Repentance and Compunction be never ſo ſincere, and they have no other Choice left, but to remain Slaves to Vice, and thoſe Wretches that make a Livelihood of their Proſtitution.

As this is certainly their Caſe, I think it would be an Act of great Benevolence, if amongſt the many noble Charities, eſtabliſhed in this Metropolis, ſome Foundation were made for the Support and Maintenance of repentant Proſtitutes; ſome ſuch Place, might even become an Ornament, and of uſe to the Kingdom, if theſe Women, who are a great many of them expert Needle-Women, were employed in a Manufacture of Dreſden Work, ſo much now the Mode, or in ſome eaſy Labour that might employ their Time, and help them to earn their Bread; had they ſuch an Aſylum to fly to, three Parts of them would voluntarily retire into it, and when they had behaved decently for a Year or two in ſuch a Retreat, the moſt rigidly Virtuous need not ſcruple giving them Countenance and Employment. To a Mind truly Humane, the more ſuch a Scheme as this is thought on, the more Advantage would be diſcovered in it, but I have only Time to hint at it as a neceſſary Means to promote a general Reformation, and I do it the rather, as I have heard you formerly approve of ſuch a Thought.

From the black Scene of the Stews, and their Inhabitants; permit me, Sir, to conduct you to the Gaming-Houſe, for theſe Places are generally near one another, and have much the ſame Effect upon the Morals of the People.

Though there is no Nation in Europe ſo much addicted to Play as we are, nor any City where there are greater Sums loſt at Play than in this; yet, I think there is no Place, where the Character of a Gameſter is held in ſo much Contempt; the Example even of the graveſt Heads, and moſt ſplendid Titles cannot ſcreen them from the Denomination of Thieves and Pick-pockets, every Body exclaims againſt it, are ſenſible that it ruins Thouſands, and ſends more to the High-way and Tyburn, than moſt other Vices; yet we go on to play, unawed by Infamy, and in ſpite of Laws and Penalties. I leave the Immorality of this Paſſion, to be ſettled and inculcated by Divines, I ſhall only here obſerve as a Politician, that the Public is moſtly concerned to prevent this Paſſion from taking Poſſeſſion of the trading, induſtrious, and labouring Part of the Community; for as to the Nobility and Gentry, it is of very little Conſequence what they do in this Reſpect, it being of very little Importance, whether five thouſand a Year is in Poſſeſſion of a Lord, or divided amongſt a hundred Sharpers. But the Misfortune is, that the Itch of Gaming, does not confine itſelf to the Gentry, it has caught the Mob, who are now as expert at E and O, and G and S, as the greateſt Judges that voted the Deſtruction of theſe Games, in the Senate, and practiſe them in all other Places; and what is ſtill worſe, it happens that the Laws made to deſtroy Gaming, have been, *like the Makers of them*, chiefly Inſtrumental in raiſing it to its preſent dangerous Height, and ſpreading the Contagion amongſt all Ranks of People. As the preſent State of Gaming is not thoroughly underſtood, and that what I have now advanced, may ſeem to many a little Paradoxical, I muſt explain myſelf at large on a Subject that deſerves our moſt ſerious Attention.

Gaming, Sir, is amongſt theſe Paſſions, in Human Nature that is not to be totally eradicated where it once takes hold of the Head, or the Heart of Man; it muſt only then be treated by a wiſe Legiſlature, by proper Reſtraints and juſt Regulations, that may prevent ſome of its moſt baneful Influence. I am much afraid this Poſition, though confirmed both by Reaſon and Experience, was not fully adverted to in framing the many Acts againſt Gaming; the Lawgivers thought it poſſible to deſtroy it intirely, and ſo have not only miſſed of their Aim, but ſpread the Diſeaſe through every Member of the Body Politic.

Before Hazard, Pharaoh, the Bank of Philet, &c. were ſuppreſſed, Gaming was indeed at a great Height, but I believe carried to no greater Exceſs than at this Day; but then it was by different Hands: Hazard is a Game beyond the Comprehenſion of the Vulgar, every Boy, Prentice, or pretty Miſs could not learn it of a ſudden; it was a Kind of Science, and required Time to be a Judge of it. However, this was ſuppreſſed, and the Conſequence was that *Rowley Powley*, E and O, and G and S took its Place, the Games that are learned in a Minute, of which the meereſt Novice is inſtantaneouſly as good a Judge as an *Archimedes*. Immediately young and old grew Gameſters, and the Itch of Gaming got amongſt the Mob; however, as theſe Games were kept in Noblemen's Houſes, or Houſes that went by ſome ſuch Name, the mere Mechanicks and working Tradeſemen, were ſtill kept out, but the Protections were no ſooner taken from theſe Houſes, than the Gaming Tables fell into the Hands of a Parcel of pillory'd infamous Thieves, who beſides, their own bad Character were conſtrained for Fear of Informations againſt them to admit Tag Rag, and Bob Tail, the mere Scum of the Earth. The better ſort of Poople, who uſed to frequent theſe Places, aſhamed of their ragged ſcandalous Company, left them, but did not give over Play, but ſettled in Private Parties in different Corners of the Town, where more is now loſt in one Night, than was in Publick in a whole Month, and where the Sharpers have full Scope, to make the moſt of their Bubbles; upon the whole, though there is not now a Publick Gaming Table in *London* or *Weſtminſter*, there is more Gaming than ever, and where the Unwary had before but two or three Temptations, which he muſt have gone out of his Way to come at, he cannot now enter a Coffee-houſe, Tavern or Alehouſe, but where he meets with a Snare, and Sharpers ready prepared to initiate him in the Myſteries of Gaming, and ſtrip him at once of his Money and Morals.

I would not, Sir, by the Scope of theſe Obſervations be thought to be an Advocate for public Gaming, I am not, Sir, I am glad thoſe that were not exempted by Law are ſuppreſſed, but I wiſh Sir, that ſince Gentlemen will play in private when they are debarred public Play, where there is much leſs Danger than in private, that ſome Means had been fallen upon in the Suppreſſion of the late Gaming Houſes, for preventing the Increaſe of private Play, that has been the Ruin of ſo many Thouſands, and that the Groom-Porter's had continued open, where Men of Fortune might have played the Fool by themſelves, without communicating this mad Diſtemper to ſo many Corners of the Town.

It is certain, Sir, private Play in *London*, &c. never was at a greater Height, and in public Places, ſuch as *Bath*, *Tunbridge*, &c. the Company are the open Bubbles of a Crew of the moſt abandoned Sharpers that ever miſſed a Halter. They Play at the Diſadvantage of four *per Cent.* on every Stake, and yet they loſe, at this Odds, with their Eyes open. This ſhews how ſtrong the Paſſion is, ſince rather than not play, they venture to infringe the Law, incur Penalties, and play with recorded Villains, at an Odds that muſt ſtrip the Bank of *England*, were ſhe to riſque it.

To leſſen this Evil, and call in the Gentlemen from their ſcattered Parties in Town, which Parties muſt ſoon diſperſe when they are deprived of the Money and Company of the Gentry, who alone ſupport them, and to reſcue thoſe that reſort to publick Places out of the Hands of Pick-pockets, I own to you I can ſee no better Remedy, but that the Groom-Porter, as uſual, ſhould open his Mad-houſe at *St. James*'s, for his Right Noble Fools, and that he ſhould be permitted by his Deputy, to keep one Hazard Table at *Bath*, *Tunbridge*, &c. This would effectually put an End to E and O, and baniſh the Sharpers from theſe Places; and ſuch Regulations might be made at ſuch Tables, as might prevent all Suſpicion of Fraud, and their being reſorted to by Tradeſmen, or Mechanicks. But if I am for tolerating the Quality, *&c.* in their mad Frolicks, I would at the ſame Time make it in ſome Meaſure uſeful to the Publick.

For I would propoſe, that the Profit ariſing from theſe Tables at *St. James*'s, *Bath*, &c. ſhould be divided in two equal Moieties, one to be for the Uſe of the Groom-Porter, his Deputies, Expences of Servants, *&c.* and the other Half to be applied religiouſly for the Support of the *Foundling Hoſpital*, which by this Means would acquire ſuch a Revenue, as to be able to take in all Children that is offered, and ſo anſwer its Name, as well as the Intention of its Foundation; for I believe under judicious Management, their Half, might amount at leaſt, to ten thouſand Pounds a Year.

Since Gaming, Sir, is not to be totally ſuppreſſed, I think this the beſt Means to prevent the future Growth of private Play, and that it is no ſmall Service to the Publick to avail itſelf of the Follies of the Great, by making them ſubſervient to the Support of ſo noble, ſo neceſſary, and ſo uſeful a Foundation as that of the *Foundling Hoſpital*. A Scheme of this Nature will require many Improvements and Additions,

ons, to reduce it into Execution; but theſe Hints are ſufficient to direct Men's Thoughts to ſuch a Subject; in the mean Time, it ought to be the Study of the Civil Magiſtrate, and of theſe often mentioned Aſſociations, to prevent Gaming Tables of E and O, and their being kept by the old Set of Thieves and Sharpers, who are, I am told, ſtill upon the Watch, to ſet up their old Trade, in Hopes of Connivance as formerly. I am,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and

Moſt humble Servant.

LETTER V.

Of Tippling, Gin Shops, and hedge Alehouſes, and Means to ſuppreſs them. Of our publick Diverſions, Regulations propoſed to render them leſs hurtful to the People, and to render the Watch more uſeful.

FROM Gaming and Wenching, Sir, let me entreat your Patience to a Tranſition to Gin-drinking, and Tippling, that Bane of *London* Servants, and I am afraid of many of a more elevated Station, eſpecially amongſt the Female Sex. The Miſchief attending the Sale of Gin, and other Spirituous Liquors in Chandlers Shops, &c. has long been complained of as a Source of the preſent Debauchery of the People, and that has influenced the Legiſlature to make many ſevere Laws againſt the Practice. The Juſtice of theſe Laws, however they might have been looked upon at firſt, as a State Trick to increaſe the Civil Liſt Revenue, are now confeſſed by every Body; yet by ſome Means or other theſe Neſts of Lewdneſs and Idleneſs are as numerous as ever, and daily ſpreading their baneful Influence in all Corners of this Metropolis; their our Servants are debauched, they are taught to thieve from their Maſter to idle their Time, and blab the Secrets of Families; and there Thieves, and Houſe-breakers contract Intimacy, lay Plots with our Servants, and from them learn the Means, Times and proper Seaſons to rob us; the labouring Workman toils for Penury, while his Wife and Daughters ſpend his honeſt Earnings at the Gin Shop; the Family is neglected, induſtry laid aſide, and the unhappy Family are either reduced to a Workhouſe,

houſe, or forced to beg or ſteal for Support, and at laſt die in Want and Wretchedneſs. Is it poſſible that a Man can be poſſeſſed of the leaſt Spark of Humanity, or have any feeling of the Sufferings of his Fellow Creatures, that can connive at, or protect theſe Wretches from publick Juſtice? Yet there is ſcarce a Houſe-keeper but knows that Gin Shops are kept at every other Door, and dares not, or has not ſo much Honeſty, publick Spirit, or Compaſſion for his Fellow Creatures, as to inform the Magiſtrate; but on the contrary, when they are detected, uſes his Influence to get the Fine mitigated. How far the Juſtices are empowered to mitigate the Fine for this Offence, I am a Stranger, but I know it is a common Thing to take ſome Trifle, and diſmiſs the guilty Wretches to their baſe Trade.

I cannot flatter myſelf that the Magiſtrate will be more cautious from any Thing I can ſay on this Subject, or that the Chandlers can, by Argument, be prevailed on to quit their gainful Trade; nor is it poſſible to deviſe Laws more ſevere to intimidate them; all depends upon the Execution of thoſe already made, and I deſpair of ſeeing that done but by an Aſſociation, of which this Abuſe ought to be a principal Object; in that Caſe, we might ſee them routed out of every Pariſh, which would be a great Benefit to the honeſt Publican, at whoſe Supineneſs in aſſerting their own Privileges I am not a little ſurprized.

But, Sir, the People, the labouring People are not only debauched in Gin Shops, but the vaſt Encreaſe of licenſed, hedge, mean Alehouſes, contribute not a little to their Idleneſs and Poverty. It muſt occur to every Man that thinks, that the Number of Vagrants, Beggars, Thieves, and Pickpockets, that infeſt this Metropolis, muſt have ſome Haunts, ſome Places of Reſort, frequented only by their Crew. Theſe can only be in ſome of our blind Alehouſes, in bye Allies, and unfrequented Corners, of which there are an infinite Number, and all acting under a Licence. I would ſubmit it to you, Sir, and the Publick, if the Suppreſſion of theſe Houſes would not contribute much to the Diſcouragement of Vice and Villainy; proper Preſentments would ſuppreſs many of them, but there is yet a ſurer and ſhorter Way to get rid of them all, and that is, to paſs a Bill, that no Houſe ſhall have a Licence to ſell Beer, Ale, &c. that does not pay a ſtated Rent, of at leaſt forty Pounds a Year, and rated as ſuch in the Pariſh Books. This would effectually deſtroy theſe hedge Alehouſes, that are the only Harbourers of all the Villains that infeſt our Streets; ſince it is not probable, that a Man, who ſtands at ſuch a Rent, can be in Fee with, or depend upon the Cuſtom of ſuch Vagabonds. To this Regulation, I would add, that all Houſes that keep Skittle-grounds, Shuffle-boards, or that permit Cards to be play'd in the Tap-room ſhould likewiſe be incapable of a Licence.

From Tippling, Sir, let us take a View of our publick Diverſions, Places that are looked upon by many, as Sources of our Misfortunes, and for that Reaſon exclaimed againſt virulently, and Propoſals urged for reducing their Number; that they contribute their Share with the reſt of the Sources I have mentioned, I make no Doubt, but it is from Cauſes different from what is commonly apprehended, and the Remedy propoſed of Reduction far from being adequate to the Diſeaſe. The Places and Diverſions there exhibited are very remote in themſelves, from having any bad Influence on the Morals of the People, and are as innocent, and as rational as any known to our more rigidly, virtuous Anceſtors. I preſume, no Man in his Wits, will deny the Quality, Gentry, and Men of Fortune and Subſtance, from reſorting to theſe Places as much as they pleaſe; their taking theſe Diverſions, either in Exceſs or Moderation, can in no Meaſure affect the publick Good. The Miſery to be complained of is, that theſe Places are crowded by People, who are not able to bear the Expence either of Time or Money employed in them; in ſhort, that they are reſorted to by Tradeſemen, their Wives, *&c.* of all Ranks, whoſe Buſineſs is neglected, and Credit ruined for the Sake of theſe polite Vanities. What it to be done? Muſt the Nobility be debarr'd an innocent rational Amuſement, becauſe the Mob will ruin themſelves to get a Sight of it? That is too great an Abſurdity; reduce the Number, yet ſtill they will crowd to what remains, and we are no better than before, only the Quality is more crowded, and have no Choice left but either to ſtay at Home, or ſubmit to be joſtled by every greaſy Tradeſman, that puſhes into their Diverſion. In ſhort, in a free Country, ſuch as this, where Money ſets all on a Level, there is ſcarce an adequate Remedy for this Evil.

What bids faireſt for ſome Redreſs, is to raiſe the Price ſo high, by laying a Tax upon ſuch Pleaſures, as may keep out ſome of the very loweſt Claſs; the Profits ariſing from this Tax, might, like that of Gaming, be apply'd for the Support of the *Foundling Hoſpital*, or ſome other publick Charity. But even this would not effectually remedy the

Abuſe of theſe Diverſions, for what Money will purchaſe, the *Engliſh* will have, and it is their Nature to be fonder of it the dearer it is, and the more they are reſtrain'd from it. To prevent then, as much as poſſible, Diverſions being haunted by thoſe who cannot ſupport this Expence, as I propoſe a Tax to be levied on all Places that take Money for Admiſſion; ſo I would propoſe, that this Tax ſhould be managed by the Maſter of the Revels, who ſhould grant Tickets only to Gentlemen of Fortune, and that none ſhould be admitted without a Sword, a full Dreſs, *&c.* and that it ſhould be made penal for any not having a Ticket from the Maſter of the Revels to appear in theſe Places with a Dreſs peculiar to a Gentleman, unleſs he really was ſuch by Birth or Fortune. This would keep up the Dignity of our Quality, and the Decorum and Chaſtity of our Places of publick Entertainment; but at the ſame Time, Sir, I would not debar the Mob the Uſe of their Drolls, Puppet-Shews, and Tumblers, provided theſe Shews were never exhibited in labouring Hours; for they have an equal Right to innocent Amuſements as the Quality, and are only to be reſtrain'd from what may debaſe their Morals, or check or divert their Induſtry.

Our Watch, Sir, is deſign'd for our Security againſt Street-robbers, Houſe-breakers, *&c.* they are a great Expence to the Inhabitants, and yet they are of very little Uſe for the Purpoſes they are intended; they are moſtly old, lazy, and unactive, are too late before they are ſet upon Duty, leave it too early, and not a few of them are ſuſpected to be in League with, or intimidated by the Rogues that infeſt our Streets. In a Word, their Inutility is obvious to moſt People, and yet the ſeveral Pariſhes to whom they belong care not to be prevailed on to alter their Meaſures, or give any Redreſs of Complaint that are exhibited againſt them; and the Management of moſt Veſtries are ſo well known to the Generality, that moſt People are diſcouraged from making their Complaints, as deſpairing of Redreſs from that Quarter.

There ought, Sir, to be ſome general Regulations to govern the whole Watch, and ſome ſhorter Remedy againſt Abuſes or Neglects committed by them, than can be obtained by Application to the Reſpective Pariſhes to which they belong. I think, their Number upon the whole, ought to be encreaſed, their Hours of Attendance ought to be as early and as long as the Lamps continued lighted; they ought to be able-bodied Men, and governed by Conſtables, that would make Conſcience, and not a Trade of their Duty.

I think it would greatly contribute to their Utility, eſpecially in *Weſtminſter*, if the Gentlemen Commiſſioners for the Court of Conſcience, or ſome others commiſſioned ſpecially for that Purpoſe, had a Power to aſcertain the Number of Watchmen in every Pariſh, to appoint general Rules for the Diſcharge of their Duty, to inſpect into their Abilities, to diſcharge ſuch as are unfit, and oblige the Pariſhes to find able-bodied Men, and redreſs all Complaints that might be made againſt them; for which Purpoſe, they ought to have ſtated Meetings in proper Places, at leaſt three Times a Week. In the City of *London*, the Court of Lord-Mayor and Aldermen, might have the Power of general Regulations, and the ſitting Alderman of redreſſing all Complaints. I am convinced, that ſome ſuch Regulation would render theſe Men more uſeful, and prevent a great many of theſe Abuſes now committed in our Streets.

I have now, Sir, given you a ſhort Detail of what I take to be the Source of our preſent Calamities, and hinted at ſome rational Expedients for Removal of theſe Abuſes; there may be many other Cauſes of leſs Note, operating with theſe already mentioned, but it would be too tedious to enter into every minute Particular that accumulates Miſchief, and contributes to the Growth of Vice and Villainy. Theſe I have mentioned, are the capital and main Springs, which if dried up, we may expect to ſee Virtue once more flouriſh, and the Laws take their full Courſe againſt obſtinate Offenders; but, Sir, it is in vain to mention theſe, if Gentlemen are lukewarm in the Cauſe, if every Man puts the laborious Taſk off from himſelf, and waits for a To-morrow to do that which ought to be done To-day. The Caſe is clamant, our Diſeaſe is deſperate, and requires a ſpeedy and effectual Remedy; it muſt not be ſlurred over with ſome temporary Expedient, but muſt be probed to the Bottom. To the Weak, the Unſteady, Impatient, or Puſilanimous, we need not plead for Redreſs; but to the honeſt Few, whoſe Heart feels the Anguiſh of the Widow and Orphan, whoſe Breaſts are warmed with Love for their Country, whoſe Zeal is animated by her Intereſt, and who are above ſelfiſh Views, or the mean Deſigns of Party and Faction, we look up for Relief from theſe Miſchiefs that diſturb our Peace. To you, Sir, and ſuch as you, your Country commits her Cauſe, and begs Protection for her violated Laws and ſinking Liberties, a Cauſe in which all may join, ſince all Parties, all Factions and

Denominations, that unhappily divide this Iſland, ſurely muſt wiſh to be free from the Tyranny of Rogues, Vagabonds, Street-robbers, and Highwaymen. I am,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient, and

moſt humble Servant.

P. S. Money given at this Seaſon of the Year to Apprentices, *&c.* is perhaps a more dangerous Piece of Villainy than is generally ſuppoſed, and ought to be prevented. But the Numbers of People detained in Jails for Debts currupts the Morals of Thouſands, gives them a Habit of Idleneſs, takes off from them a Senſe of Shame, and prepares them by inſenſible Degrees for the greateſt Villainies: Some Act that would clear our Jails, and keep them clear, would contribute much to the general Honeſty.

FINIS.

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